

## David Henry for County Council (at large)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

In 2021, I lent an early voice to slow down the Buffalo Springs "Restoration" Project, which sparked my interest in pursuing a seat on the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter Executive Board, to which I was elected in 2021. At the time, I made comment on the issue to Governor Holcomb, some of which follows: " The trees of the Hoosier National Forest are the green lungs of the State of Indiana. In *Monroe County Commissioners v. US Forest Service (2020)*, the county rightly identified that the Forest is a significant carbon sink, which has seen a 34% uptick in stored carbon since the 1990s. Burning and releasing that carbon into the miasmatic air we already have will simply double down on chronic health outcomes for Hoosiers, not to mention roll back every effort we have made to curb climate change in our time. The Forest is doing the work that we have not; by capturing as much carbon as it can as part of its natural process." I am proud of the work of SC and IFA in continuing to fight to protect this critical ecosystem in Southern Indiana. However, I had, as the local vice chair of my Democratic Party, found myself acting chair after a resignation. I made the hard decision to step back from my burgeoning direct advocacy, and turned to leading a local political party. However, I continued to make space for candidates who shared commitments to the environment, public health, and air and water quality in my county and region. This may sound passive, but a party chair can directly influence and exclude candidates in partisan elections - which is sadly the case in other counties. By making specific choices for party neutrality in primaries, and facilitating relationships among more progressive candidates, I hope I contributed in a small way to leveling the playing field on these issues in my community. Lastly, my professional career began in the intersection of public health, emergency management and security. I lecture in my courses at IU on Emergency Management the criticality of climate resilience, and on the disparate impact of natural hazards on marginalized communities. In short, as Indiana's climate changes into something more akin to the southern US or Texas in my lifetime, our resilience to natural disasters is dependent on more immediate actions when it comes to phosphate runoff from farms in our watershed and restoring as much canopy as possible.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

The Indiana Statehouse. I am not being facetious. The incursions on home rule remove any tools we may have at a local level to attempt more progressive environmental action. Lobbying and working

with advocacy groups engaged with our legislature will only be benefited by local elected officials who may be better positioned to gain the attention of their statehouse delegation.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

My county's non-emergency fleet should move forward with alternative fuel vehicles, which currently lag the City of Bloomington's adoption. I am a supporter of the recent efforts to improve rural transit in my county and will continue to press for a climate action plan adoption in our county.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

We have a unique opportunity in Monroe County to encourage density around the incorporated spaces in my community. Right now, service workers cannot afford the rent in Bloomington. Thus, they commute in from counties away. If they drive 20 miles each way, they are putting 10 pounds of carbon into the county's air, and 2500 pounds a year per commuter. I'd like to see us work toward shortening the commute time of working class members of our community by improving housing choices closer to where they work. All of those efforts will help to keep wetlands safer in my community.

How would you prioritize and address the disparate impacts of climate change on different social groups in your community, particularly vulnerable populations in both urban and rural settings? Please detail specific policies or initiatives you would support or propose that align with climate justice principles, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and energy, as well as protection from environmental hazard

Over the years I have lectured at IU on this topic, that natural hazards become disasters when we make choices about where and how communities develop. Cheaper land is often in riskier places, like floodplains. Prefabricated homes lack the protections from tornado or straight line winds the way a brick-and-mortar home or housing complex might have concrete basements. Much of the challenge of disparate impact comes by way of zoning choices, which by their nature exclude housing forms

from one another. Indiana has banned inclusionary zoning but this doesn't mean that developers cannot be incentivized to foster housing choices within their developments - and often want to - as they know that diversity is a positive community building choice. We should, in the role I'm seeking, increase our discretionary fund - known as the Sophia Travis Grant Program - to allow for direct aid on this issue. Bloomington is fortunate to have a movement in food security primarily led by Women of Color that the county council could help with grants to improve food justice programs and bring produce to food deserts. Another aspect of this that has my attention was the recent "Derecho" event last August in Indiana, that knocked out power in my community for upwards of four days. For those families without a generator, lost frozen food and groceries represented a paycheck or two for working families, and put a lot more people at risk. Not being able to charge a cellphone after 48 hours meant that countless homes were cut off from emergency services. We simply must provide refrigeration and power stations for those victimized by hazards - especially those made more intense by climate change - to relieve this disparate impact. We have a unique opportunity to invest in green technology - perhaps solar powered charging stations - to help with this emergency need for phone charging during increasing mass outages as our energy grid ages.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

Power goes where power is, as the saying goes. While the county council has no legislative power, it has the power of the purse. We demonstrate our commitment to action through budgets. They are moral documents - they show our willingness to put our money where our mouth is. We have a critical four years ahead - where a future County Development Ordinance lacks a climate action plan. This absolutely must be redressed in the next term with our commission. I'm up for the debate.

## Peter Iversen for County Commissioner (district 2)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

As president emeritus of the County's Environmental Commission and a twice-elected County Council member, I was a vocal leader in fighting the clear-cutting, burning, and spreading of glyphosate in the Houston South area. These proposed actions by the Forest Service would have severely endangered Lake Monroe, a site precious for its potable water and draw for tourism. On

multiple occasions, I argued vehemently to appropriate the funds to allow our actions to go forward. Had these funds not been available, Monroe County would not have been able to be such a forceful participant in the lawsuit. As President-emeritus of the Environmental Commission, I inaugurated a contractual relationship with the Environmental Resilience Institute at Indiana University. This had never been done before, and I ushered through the funding and the contracts to secure our placement in the 2023-4 cohort in addition to funding a McKinney Climate Fellow. I supervised all three fellows as they worked closely with me to draft the first Climate Resiliency Plan by any county in Indiana. We also broadened the efforts of our workshops to residents throughout the County. As this project moved forward, I reached out to our Planning and Stormwater departments to assist in moving the plan forward, showing that collaboration on climate action is possible.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

There are many. The first issue is the effects of climate change. We have identified the two with the most risk to Monroe County as increased flooding and high heat days. Both of these risks are in the County's Climate Resilience Plan. Both risks have the potential to cause injury or even death, and we must take action now to be resilient as these risks grow. The second issue is that the County is not prepared to tackle the challenges of climate change. I have been playing a leadership role, but I can not do many things a staff member can do. The County needs to be writing more green grants. The County needs to develop a Climate Action Plan. The County needs to implement the voluminous actions from the Climate Resilience Plan. This climate work should be operationalized by a full-time professional. Only when this happens will the County begin to professionalize its climate action. The third issue is that the County Health Department is quantifying and categorizing the environmental impacts on human health. The 2021 Community Health Assessment (CHA) details much information about canopy needs to ameliorate high heat days, the presence of PCBs in our water, and the availability of green space. The 2024 CHA is currently being updated with a series of public meetings, and many of the issues facing our community will be addressed in that report.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

First, attitudes are changing on this topic. When leaders first proposed Bicycle Apartments, a residence without parking. Now, we build new spaces with fewer surface lots in this community. We are also seeing BT expanding into the County, which I favor. I have been knocking on many doors to talk with voters, and a few of them mentioned high-speed rail maps that the federal Department of

Transportation has been issuing. I travel to Chicago regularly, and I also will want to put things in place should Federal funding start to arrive in a second Biden administration. Second, our zoning needs to be transportation-oriented with new developments. This multi-modal perspective means providing several transportation options to residents, including bike paths, bus lines, and pedestrian-oriented spaces. This progress also includes expanding the trail systems in Monroe County to connect not just north to south but east to west. Third, we need to allow for more mixed-use zoning in the County. This progressive step would bring services closer to residential areas, reducing the average miles driven.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

We are in a housing crisis; we simply don't have the housing inventory to meet demand. I base this on the recently updated Housing Study by ROI, the reporting that I'm hearing from local employers and Indiana University. Folks want to live here, but they can't afford it. We can do something about this that also protects the local environment. We need to not think about housing and the environment as a binary choice; I have repeatedly said this publicly. We are an intellectual community, and I know we can approach our problem with a "yes, and" instead of an "either/or". We have learned our lesson about putting houses in flood plains. These locations are where the low-income homes have been. But as our floodplain maps are expanding with climate change and as we take climate equity seriously, those areas are no longer seen as desirable for housing. Instead, these are ideal places for green space preservation. For example, the work expanding Beanblossom Bottom Nature Preserve is a protected natural area while homes are built just 5 miles away in Ellettsville. As Commissioner, I will shield floodplains and wetlands. We also have an environmental overlay in areas around Lake Monroe. We know that construction and related building activity can negatively affect soil erosion and sedimentation into the lake. As Commissioner, I will protect Lake Monroe. There are exciting advances in home construction that make operating a home protect the environment. As we work toward electrification, we can ensure that domestic and commercial energy is produced with solar installations. Appliances are becoming more energy efficient. Home design also prioritizes energy efficiency. Lastly, as your Commissioner, I will govern transparently and collaboratively. Any development that occurs will receive public scrutiny and input. This transparency is how I approached Justice reform when I presided over the Justice Fiscal Advisory Committee. It is how I govern as President of the Personnel Administration Committee. It is how I lead as President

of the Substance Use Disorder Commission. As Commissioner, I will shine public light on the proceedings of the government.

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Climate equity is crucial to me. In my Climate Resilience work, I emphasized climate equity in our two public workshops. During this, we recruited and engaged with individuals with diverse lived experiences. This diversity was necessary because it shaped our vulnerabilities and led to better solutions. Implementing those actions also necessitates a mind toward climate equity. The Blue Ribbon Commission has a variety of folks from all across the County who offer disparate views that inform how we work to provide resilience from flooding and high heat. One example is thinking about cooling stations. These third spaces were historically located at fire stations. Some folks can't get to their nearest location because of transportation issues. Some folks don't feel comfortable in a fire station. Some folks don't have the technology to receive updates that this service exists. None of this would have come to the attention of the implementation team had it not been for the input from folks with this lived experience. Equity is a significant issue for my campaign. At [www.PeterIversen.org](http://www.PeterIversen.org) you can see that DEI is one of my top 5 priorities. I am deeply disturbed by justice inequities in our County jail, as detailed by the NAACP. I am equally concerned that the County does not have an ongoing bias and cultural competency program. These will change once I am elected as your Commissioner.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

I'm already doing it. Monroe County is the first county in Indiana to have a Climate Resiliency Plan. If you read the literature on climate action, it is very city-focused. But here in Monroe County, we show that Counties can play a role. Counties are a top employer in most communities. They oversee health, justice, parks, airports, and more. Counties can have an impact within our borders, but we can encourage and influence others to take the first steps. Indeed Counties tend to be more conservative than cities, and this is where we need to advance common-sense climate action. Second, Monroe

County can continue to show leadership by collaborating with others to strengthen our efforts. Regional action is growing in popularity, and this is a great way to showcase action in cross-jurisdictional areas such as water, air, and energy. Third, Monroe County can be a voice to lobby for state-wide resources. Based on the lessons learned in this county, our experiences can lead to opportunities for conversations with legislators.

## Matt Caldie for County Council (at large)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

Most recently, I'm really proud of having written an advisory report on Bloomington's air quality, which can be found at <https://bloomington.in.gov/boards/environment/reports>. I was a relative air quality novice before deciding to write it, but I learned so much throughout the process and presented the report before the Bloomington City Council. Sometime in the future -- when I'm less tied up with campaigning -- I'd love to work to encourage local government to take some type of action on air quality monitoring. Beyond a lot of other good Environmental Commission work, I've rallied at the statehouse with Indiana Forest Alliance and written so many letters to my representatives. But I might be most proud of the hands-on experience I got at trash pickups I volunteered with in Bartholomew County. I remember doing so many of them around my elementary school, and also routinely doing them out in the country where my family lives. I couldn't believe how much trash was along the side of the road in a half-mile or even quarter-mile stretch of the country. It was so satisfying to look back at afterwards, realizing that we were making a difference.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

There are so many good potential answers to this question. Recently, I've been paying the most attention to water issues. There are a lot of places in this community where stormwater isn't getting enough attention. There are also many Planned Unit Developments where developers are requesting too high of an impervious surface percentage. But my biggest focus lately has been on inadequate stream buffer protections. Bloomington's Unified Development Ordinance calls for zone 1 stream

buffer protections to be 25 feet, measured from the middle of the stream. Best practices according to the US Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture, and IDEM call for measurements to start at the top of the stream bank (or when applicable, wetland edge). For wide streams or streams with steep banks in our area, 25 feet measured from the center of the stream may not offer hardly any zone 1 buffer protection. Vegetated stream buffers are critical to the stability of the stream bank and to minimizing runoff of soil and pollutants to the stream. As we move forward with developments, and as climate change moves forward with more extreme precipitation events, our community must prioritize the health of our watershed. Without a healthy Monroe Reservoir, we'll all be in trouble.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

We must continue to invest in mass transit to serve as many as possible. However, the most significant way to reduce emissions from automobiles in our community may be more about increasing density. When someone lives within a 15 minute walk from the places they work, play, or attend school, vehicle trips can significantly reduced. We need to build more units of housing close to where the action is if we ever want to reduce our dependence on automobiles.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

Ideally, sensitive environmental features would be protected within the city's Unified Development Ordinance or the county's County Development Ordinance. Environmental standards such as canopy preservation, permeable surface percentages, and land uses should be codified such that basic protections are not neglected. Then, in major cases or cases where variances are requested, decision-makers need to prioritize protecting old-growth tree stands, wetlands, karst features and more. We could even set up a system where certain development proposals trigger an environmental review from an environmental planner, a board or commission, or an outside consultant. We can increase our housing stock sensibly and with good planning, while still working to conserve our precious natural features.



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We must work together and commit to ensuring that our community develops in a way that does not disproportionately expose vulnerable populations to environmental hazards, such as increased rates of air pollution, water pollution, flooding, dust, odor, noise and light pollution, illegal dumping, toxic runoff into neighborhoods and nearby bodies of water. While this is more relevant to Commissioners than Council Members, we can all do our part to see to it that new development plans are viewed through the lens of environmental justice going forward.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

The County Council isn't an executive or legislative body, so it isn't immediately intuitive how one might advance climate solutions from that role. But I believe you want someone in every level of government who deeply cares about environmental issues. My thought processes are always influenced by climate and environmental factors (heavily so, not just as the last detail on a cost benefit analysis list). I think that on County Council, I would have the opportunity to collaborate with other decision makers who may not hold climate and environmental issues to the same level of importance as I do. My hope is that by advocating for these issues from office, I will be able to bring them to prominence with other officials as well.

**Jody Madeira for County Commissioner (district 3)**

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

I've worked on many projects to protect public health for Hoosiers, albeit not from environmental sources. My research is focused on law and medicine, and I'm the international expert in fertility fraud, where a physician (usually in the 1970s and 1980s) used his own sample to inseminate women undergoing fertility treatment without her knowledge or consent. These cases have persisted into the present, including one from 2009. I helped female patients and their adult children to pass a law in Indiana providing civil and criminal penalties for fertility fraud in 2019. Since then, I've worked with victims to pass laws in 11 states, and we are currently advocating for a federal bill, HR451, which currently has 50 bipartisan cosponsors. I also am very active on a second public health issue, gun violence prevention. I served as Moms Demand Action's Legislative Advocacy Director from 2015-2017, and now serve on the American Academy of Pediatrics Gun Violence Prevention Research Roundtable.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

I think that overall the biggest issue facing Monroe County's environmental health is climate change. I'm also very concerned, however, about agricultural pollution from farms and insufficient regulation of wetlands - this was made easier by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling (Sackett v. EPA) that removed federal protections from large tracts of wetlands that had been covered by the Clean Water Act, allowing the states to regulate in this vacuum. Shockingly, more than half of the U.S.'s 118M acres of wetlands now are unprotected by federal regulations.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

Expanded rural transit Discounts for public transportation Incentives to carpool Excluding vehicles from parts of the city center (such as Kirkwood's restaurant row) Increased charging stations for EVs

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Housing is a major issue in my campaign. Currently, the county commissioners favor low density housing in the county, which is much more environmentally harmful than higher density housing. I

would ensure that development proceeds without risking environmental protections by preferring proposals for higher-density housing in conservation development projects where a substantial proportion - preferably 50% - of the land is undeveloped. Old-growth forests and wetlands must be protected, and when these and other environmental features are present on a property slated for potential development, the planning commission should restrict development on those areas of parcels.

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Everyone deserves the healthiest possible environment. Income-restricted housing should not be constructed on land polluted from former industrial use. I will meet with organizations representing marginalized groups to hear how they are affected by environmental changes and whether they would be disproportionately affected by environmental protection regulations. I will meet with organizations representing marginalized groups to see if there are cultural, language, or financial factors that impair their ability to access healthy food, health care, I will promote community grants that would provide funding for needed projects to underserved sections of our community. I will advocate for environmental justice - not foisting our problems onto those who are most vulnerable and can least afford to pay. I will prioritize maintaining aging infrastructure in areas with predominantly low-income residents, using the same standards as in other parts of the community where residents with higher-incomes live (e.g., I will not fix things "on the cheap" or in substandard ways). I will also ensure that individuals from minoritized groups have equal access to resources, food, medical care, and other emergency services following extreme weather. I will engage community residents to put more things on this list!

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

I think this is a pivotal moment because we are starting down the barrel of a potential second Trump presidency and the prospect of a more extreme state governor. Trump will try to dismantle core governmental institutions, just like he did before - but this time he knows how to do it more

aggressively and efficiently. It's also going to be important to have a strong local government in the likely event that the Indiana General Assembly attempts to assert more control over political subdivision affairs. Moreover, I can advance climate solutions in Indiana by supporting additional environmental protections on a local level. Indiana is expected to continue to experience warmer temperatures, more rainfall, and more extreme heat, and it's critically important to consider these factors in light of increased housing and commercial development. For example, we can paint industrial roofs white, and development plans will have to mitigate increased flooding. That's why wetlands protections are incredibly important - and local government can help to ensure that developments don't harm these areas. With additional rainfall, we also need additional measures to help control pollution from farm fields (sediment and fertilizer) that can decrease water quality.

## Trent Deckard for County Council (at large)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

I am proud to have joined with council colleagues in suing to block the federal government from clearing and applying pesticides around Lake Monroe. I spoke out passionately about the issues that this could cause for our water source and the damage that such effects could do. While the Forest Service attempted to make a convincing case that this was harmless, I didn't buy their logic. Many of my own family gave up their homes to create the lake in an effort to fulfill the greater good of supplying water to thousands of homes and mitigating flooding. To not stand up as a council, which some members did not, would have been turning our back on that public trust. I also am the only person in this race to have negotiated continuation of public transit for rural residents. I've worked on this for a year, getting other localities such as Ellettsville, to fund their part and Monroe County, too. If we lost transit in these areas, it would mean that advanced transit would never be a reality and we need that more comprehensively in the county both to protect air quality but also to get people where they need to be. Poverty is a huge factor affecting Indiana's environment and placing people into difficult situations by cutting transit was never an option.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

I am overwhelmingly concerned about water control, particularly as it relates to flooding that comes about due to changing weather conditions as a result of climate change. Flooding issues affect our county border-to-border and generally cut across socio-economic conditions. Whether downtown or out in the county, we need to talk about water management when it comes to areas where ground is displaced by concrete and other development. I've been impressed with green roofing that I've seen in Greece and I think this could be a good option for us, in addition to offering some potential green and garden space. We are a community that will have development due to the attractiveness of our area (and we want that), but we need to be talking harder about how we move water through the community after storms. Poverty is a close second. Simply put, individuals facing poverty will be negatively impacted in many difficult ways and have little time or consideration for environmental concerns or best practices as they simply seek to survive. For too many, living in the community means going greater distances for food or health, and that position is not sustainable for their life or the life of the community.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

I answered a bit of this before, but would add that within the next year we will be exploring with Bloomington, the Town of Ellettsville, and state ways that our federal transit dollars can go beyond their limited models and get more into the method of advancing transit. I see this as a pivotal thing happening in the next few years. I'd like to combine those options with local matching dollars to make us a regional hub for good transit options. Simply put, we know the demand for such services will increase as the area grows. I'd like to see a time where my daughters in just a few short years will see readily available transit options, along with bike and foot paths, as a choice way to get from point A to B and not give it a second thought.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

I agree with my council colleague that we can both build housing and protect the environment. I don't automatically accept that not building housing automatically protects the environment. I believe that we need to be smart about these things and at the same time, we need to demystify building

procedures and best practices for doing so in an environmentally-friendly way. People deserve to know about these best practices and we should be actively going after matching funds, TIF dollars, or other grant sources to alleviate costs in providing affordable housing that is environmentally friendly. Bloomington's Sunflower homes provide some inspiration for this and many of the owners of those units love them. We could learn from that example as well as other cutting edge ideas.

How would you prioritize and address the disparate impacts of climate change on different social groups in your community, particularly vulnerable populations in both urban and rural settings? Please detail specific policies or initiatives you would support or propose that align with climate justice principles, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and energy, as well as protection from environmental hazard

First, as mentioned before, we have to recognize that we only have one water source, Lake Monroe, and we came to that source after much difficulty and hardship. (A trip to Leonard Springs or Twin Lakes, our failed reservoirs, will support my claim.) The county, along with others, must be prepared to do anything necessary to protect our lake. This community has already been wracked by PCBs left by corporate dumping. We can't allow our only water source to similarly get contaminated. Increasing temperatures due to climate change mean that water conditions will get wildly more difficult and make it even harder to protect our lake. Second, we have to control for hazardous weather and flooding, which I also have already discussed. Flooding has wreaked havoc in every section of this county and is devastating when it occurs. It's already getting worse due to climate change. We need to be smarter about quicker moving water that results during flash flooding. In recent years, we've lost lives, a fire station, and countless dollars border-to-border in private homes and businesses across the county. This problem keeps me up at night as I think about increasing numbers of devastating storms that arrive quicker and harder than ever. Third, we need to be vigilant about affordability that is driving up poverty when it comes to housing, childcare, and other quality of place issues. I've served on the Monroe County Health Equity Council and its goal is to take policy makers directly to those most affected in marginalized communities. Our think our environmental policy needs a resurgence with such consideration. We've languished too long around successes of yesterday. We have also not fully empowered our boards and commissions that can best advise us on these measures. If affordability is not addressed, families will be even less prepared as climate change worsens and in a time that we need everyone mindful of what is happening and how to offset it. Fourth, I'd like to see state law give us greater latitude on punishing organizations, such as corporations, or entities that dump on our land or pollute recklessly. These punishments should be sizable and make bad actors think twice. This kind of measure could have helped to prevent PCB

contamination and similarly keep others from dumping their problems and going out of business. It also may help to deter local emissions and keep all corporate entities competitive in proposing solutions.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

Being in office gives you a public platform to weigh-in on issues. It's also a great platform to problem-solve with other officials and I see all of these concerns as an every-hand-on-deck approach. I think we need to change the way we communicate on climate change a bit and I tend to do this. Many individuals do not understand climate change or reconcile the term with some of the things I've discussed in this survey, such as flooding. Everyone understands flooding, along with poverty or hunger. Everyone wants to protect the lake. We need to meet more people where they are at and not talk at them.

## Cheryl Munson for County Council (at large)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?

Bloomington, Indiana's PCB incinerator, decades ago.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

Without clean water, like we currently enjoy at Lake Monroe, we will have both public health and economic downturns. Our water supply is threatened by environmental degradation, including increased deterioration due to climate change. Ongoing and future environmental changes will bring more intense rainstorms, hence greater soil erosion and enhanced growth of harmful algae which results from the introduction of new sediment and various nutrients. Algal growth significantly impacts water quality, requiring increased use of water purifying chemicals that lower the quality of the public's drinking water. Increased sediment also builds up in the lake and gradually shortens the lifespan of the reservoir. Historically, the county has built other reservoirs, all of which failed. Given our regional geology, the present site of Lake Monroe is Monroe County's only option for a reservoir location. We must take care of this resource by identifying the greatest threats to water quality and mitigative steps to reduce those. The Lake Monroe Management Plan conducted by Friends of Lake

Monroe through grants from IDEM for plan development and the first year of plan implementation has provided a foundational beginning. The grants were partly supported with matching funds and other support from the Monroe County Stormwater Fund, the City Of Bloomington's Utilities Department, Indiana University, and the Indiana Geological and Water Survey. A long-term commitment by local governments is needed for continued monitoring of water quality and mitigation of impacts at Lake Monroe in the two counties most dependent on the lake, Monroe and Brown counties.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

1. I would support a City-County public transit system that has two components: (1) regular bus routes comparable to what the city has now with additional routes to more rural areas, on a reduced schedule. (2) A reworking of the County's "Rural Transit," to provide door-to-door service throughout the city, towns, and county for the elderly, infirm, etc. to attend doctor's appointments, shop, visit the library, etc. 2 I have been on record as supporting increased broadband service in our unserved and underserved areas of the county, which will open many doors to work-at-home employment and tele-health medical care and reduce the need for people to be on the road in their own vehicles.

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How would you prioritize and address the disparate impacts of climate change on different social groups in your community, particularly vulnerable populations in both



urban and rural settings? Please detail specific policies or initiatives you would support or propose that align with climate justice principles, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and energy, as well as protection from environmental hazard

The greatest distinctions in social groups in our community are defined not by race or national origin but by income, both for residents of the city and in rural areas. We could say wealth is a great equalizer, but the converse is equally true and more apparent. It is hard for families to focus on how they and the community could/should try to improve clean air, water, and energy, when food insecurity is a driving force for them. Similarly, for so many families living in substandard housing that wastes energy for heating/cooling, the issues have a different definition; their idea of air quality is to have enough heat to be comfortable and healthy in the winter, and enough cooling to make it through the worst days of summer. The same is true of other aspects of the environment. Climate justice must begin with food and housing. Those are my priorities. I have worked at our Township level to help our neediest residents with housing challenges. I have also worked with our local, rural food pantry to help our neediest neighbors, which keeps me well grounded. As an elected county official I have championed our neediest residents by leading the County Council's Community Services Grants Committee. The grants program annually awards funds to qualifying not-for-profits to support the work that they do for our residents, for example those who need to upgrade the condition of their homes to winterize them. I have also supported county financing for programs to address repairs of substandard housing located outside city limits for income-eligible residents to improve housing conditions for people who are not eligible to benefit from city programs. Elderly residents who own their own homes face the worst issues. When they can be comfortable and safe in their homes, then part of the upgrade should include energy-efficient appliances. While the county lacks the kind of inspection-driven, health and safety monitoring of rental properties that the city provides, I am in support of developing a county ordinance and inspection system because energy use-incentives can be directed to landlords, while also helping the people who depend on rented places for their residence.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

First, as a member of the Monroe County Council, which is the fiscal body of Indiana's county government, I have a voice that is heard by taxpayers when I discuss with them, and at public meetings, why their hard-earned dollars should be spent for X or Y, or why I favor some other action.

The “why” part of the discussion provides education to help the county residents I represent understand the reasons for my recommendation or my vote. And so, I have used my voice first and foremost to advocate for protecting the quality of our drinking water. Advocacy came first by word, of which there were many – to the federal agency whose proposed project threatened this quality, and to state and federal officials who might have some effect on the agency’s decision, and also to the public. Advocacy followed by deed, namely finding legal representation, securing public funds, and filing a lawsuit to require the federal agency to plan to not impact the drinking water supply for county residents. The legal case is still in progress, and continuing my voice is important. Second, as the County Council’s appointee to the County Plan Commission, I will have the opportunity to help shape the County Development Ordinance in a way that will foster environmental protections while meeting part of the loud public demand for increased housing that is affordable. The latter can only be achieved by increasing housing density per acre, but this must be accommodated within areas that have sewers or sewer package plants, and in areas that are adjacent to other higher-density developments. In other words, we should look at higher-density residential “spread,” not “sprawl,” gradual extensions of higher-density residential areas rather than islands of high density surrounded by rural residential areas. Also, as a member of the Plan Commission, I have recently urged the Planning Department to develop a dashboard to communicate how many building sites will be available in each planning zone in the new Development Ordinance, plus how many already built-out sites exist in those zones. This will give us an accurate picture of what lands are available for future residential use. For the public, it would also be good for all of us to know the previous residential building density and how many building sites are already built-out and how many are still available for construction, so they can better appreciate the CDO proposal. Each of the new planning zones should additionally specify areas of environmental concern that are known, e.g., karst terrain, floodplains, wetlands, extensive areas of steep slope, mature forests, Classified forests, and other concerns. This dashboard – by subtraction – will highlight those areas that are most safely and easily developable for residential construction, and thus be comparable to the county’s industrial development planning overlay. The dashboard will help to build housing while preserving environmentally fragile areas, and will further help plan for future undertakings for housing and long-term environmental preservation.

## Penny Githens for County Commissioner (district 3)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

As a County Commissioner, I have voted to retain legal representation to fight the U.S. Forest Service's plan to log, clear-cut, burn, and apply glyphosate in a portion of the Hoosier National Forest that is in the Lake Monroe watershed. Lake Monroe provides the drinking water for a vast majority of the residents of Monroe County, and the potential silt runoff and contamination due to glyphosate pose a real, longterm harm to Lake Monroe. Algal blooms in Lake Monroe have already caused the water to have an unpleasant taste over the past two summers, and this has the potential to make things worse. It also seems unconscionable, in a time of climate crisis, to remove the natural carbon sinks which trees provide, and trees which help to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. These shade from these trees, which provide a natural cooling effect to both the land and streams, will also be lost, with special concern being to the increased water temperature of streams feeding into Lake Monroe. Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service failed to adequately investigate the impact of their plan on the flora and fauna in this area, including endangered bat species. I have voted against a requested rezone to allow denser housing in an area with sinkholes, partially because the developer wanted to build very close to them. And voted for a commercial rezone which would require the owner to maintain a wider margin around two sinkholes on his property. The County Commissioners have worked with area residents on the design of Fullerton Pike. This road was originally slated to be 5 lanes wide. Due to resident input, it has been reduced to 3 lanes - which will reduce the impervious service - and add walking and bike paths. The residents also provided input on the design of the county's first roundabout at the intersection of S. Rogers Street and Gordon Pike, which is landscaped with limestone and native plants and flowers. There are areas within Monroe County which flood, washing out or damaging roads. To reduce the chance of this happening, our stormwater department is now doing ditching work before roads are repaved. I also sit on the Executive Board of the Waste Reduction District of Monroe County, a board which seeks to reduce what going into landfills - and this includes compostable materials - increase recycling and re-use, and educate the public on ways to "reduce, reuse, and recycle." One of our recent efforts has been to fund a pilot program to encourage people in apartment complexes to compost. Another has been to look at whether or not we can put solar panels at our closed landfill and to approve the planting of 8,000 seedlings at the landfill. From a public health perspective, I have helped Monroe County secure an additional \$560,000 opioid settlement grant to work on harm reduction for those with a substance use disorder. Those who participate in a harm reduction program are more likely to

enter a treatment program and more likely to seek healthcare for infections of diseases like Hepatitis C and HIV. The County Commissioners - working with our colleagues on the County Council - have authorized use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to put solar panels on several more of our county buildings and to build covers at one of our ground parking lots which will have solar panels on them. Charging stations will also be installed, with the goal to move at least some of the county fleet to electric vehicles which will be charged from these charging stations. We also used some of the ARPA funds to purchase 5 electric buses for our Rural Transit system.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

Like many other local governments throughout the United States, the climate crisis is a big threat. We already sit in an area which gets tornados, and we expect the number and severity of tornados and heavy storms to increase. Temperatures are also rising, which increases the demand for electricity for cooling in the summer as well as impacting water quality. Monroe County is the first county in Indiana to develop a climate resiliency plan and to create a blue ribbon commission to implement the plan. (The plan will soon be available at the county's website, [www.co.monroe.in.us](http://www.co.monroe.in.us)) We expect more severe weather, not only more intense periods of rain, but also longer dry spells. While this is very minor, our Waste Reduction District along with our Soil and Water District, sell rain barrels to citizens at cost to encourage the capture and use of rainwater.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

We will soon be building a new jail and justice campus. One of the proposal is to build an extra large parking lot and use this as a park-and-ride opportunity for people who live outside the City of Bloomington who work inside the City. We are expanding our trails, and hope someday to have a much more extensive, connected series of trails which will allow people to safely bike from one location to another. I would like to see an arrangement with a few churches which are near the outer boundaries of Monroe County allow residents to park in their church lots during the week as part of a park-and-ride system.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are

environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

We are developing a new zoning ordinance, one which will remove approximately 3,000 acres of land in flood zones from being used for residential and commercial building. (Some developers and builders are unhappy with this.) Due to poor soils, Monroe County had put into place an ordinance which prohibited the building on slopes greater than 15 percent. This was put into place to prevent the runoff of the top layer and to prevent silt from going into streams and lakes. Earlier this year the Indiana legislature enacted legislation which said that one cannot prohibit building on a slope of less than 25 percent based strictly on slope. We will now need to create a more complex ordinance for building that links the exact nature of the soil with the slope. This may also increase the need to inspections by our stormwater and building departments. Since septic systems cannot be built on slopes greater than 15 percent, additional oversight will also be needed by the county health department to ensure the safety of the septic system.

How would you prioritize and address the disparate impacts of climate change on different social groups in your community, particularly vulnerable populations in both urban and rural settings? Please detail specific policies or initiatives you would support or propose that align with climate justice principles, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and energy, as well as protection from environmental hazard

I have already outlined of the ways, as a county commissioner, I am working to maintain the water quality of Lake Monroe, the source of drinking water for much of the county. If more costly methods are needed to ensure the drinking water is safe, it will disproportionately hurt those at lower income levels. (Please note that Bloomington is the major population center of Monroe County. Bloomington, through the City of Bloomington Utilities (CBU) refused to join our suit against the U.S. Forest Service.) Changes are occurring in the federal requirements being put into place for local transit systems, which impacts both the Bloomington Transit system and the local Rural Transit system. The changes will make it harder for rural transit to provide transportation the way they have for many decades. We are just beginning to realize the overall impact and who all will need to be at the table to develop solutions. At times, as roads are up-graded or widened, trees need to be removed. We are in the process of developing a policy of tree replacement. It is generally less costly - and less disruptive environmentally - to maintain an existing home rather than build a new one. Using ARPA funds, we have created a Rural Housing Repair program to help low- and moderate-income homeowners

maintain their homes. This allows people with leaking roofs or failed water heaters, or damaged water pipes to receive up to \$20,000 for home repairs. The program has helped many people maintain their homes, and kept their homes habitable.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?\*

Increasing solar panels on county buildings and installing charging stations, with the intention of operating electric vehicles, is a small step forward. I hope that the savings in fossil fuels for electricity and vehicles can be put toward other efforts to help with climate solutions, such as a park-and-ride system, especially if that park-and-ride system can utilize existing parking lots at various locations throughout the county. As Monroe County develops its new zoning ordinance, I would like to see areas designated which encourages smaller homes, the use of shared green space - including community gardens - and the maintenance of areas with mature trees.

## Julie Thomas for County Commissioner (district 2)

What past projects are you most proud of having worked on to protect Indiana's environment, air, water, or public health?\*

Since I joined Monroe County government in 2009 (on the County Council), and as a Commissioner since 2013, I have been a leader in environmental stewardship. This includes initiatives to add renewable energy to county buildings (2012, 2015, and 2024). This most recent effort will significantly increase our plug-in capacity to change the basis of our fleet from gas-power to all-electric and hybrid-electric vehicles. I have played a pivotal role in the county's lawsuit to stop the Forest Service's planned clear-cutting, burning, and the use of glyphosates in the watershed of Lake Monroe - our drinking water supply. In terms of public health, I am so proud of our work during the pandemic - we kept businesses open with grants (not loans, like the city), we worked with partners across the community (IU, city, Ellettsville, the hospital) and forged relationships to help us address the pandemic effectively. We helped our residents stay safe with the best information available. (I use "we" because the Board of Commissioners work together). This year, we extended a Rural Transit - type service to the more densely populated parts of the community. I worked extensively with the County Council and the Ellettsville Town Council to make this happen for 2024. This is a huge win for people who rely on transit for work, medical appointments, and running errands. I am

working on the next step to provide service in 2025. We need to continue to find ways (on the Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors) to compost food waste, increase the recycling of various materials throughout our community, and to develop a good program for green composting.

What is the biggest issue facing your community's environmental health?

There is more than one: greenhouse gas, reducing our reliance on coal and oil, ensuring that we have a clean drinking water supply, addressing stormwater issues (climate change, floodways, karsts), improving access to nutritious foods, improved multi-modal transportation options that are accessible, affordable, and viable transportation options for all ages.

What proposals do you have to expand transit options to reduce passenger car dependence in your area?\*

I continue to champion the expansion of transit services. As noted above, we made one good step in expanding transit this year. We are working through developing a reliable, affordable, permanent solution for 2025 and beyond. Rural Transit offers a wonderful service. We need to ensure it remains available. Adding to our parks and trail inventory is also important - and these need to provide safe and accessible opportunities for transit. Providing solar-based plug in access for our county employees is another way to have a positive impact on our environment. I hope to expand this access to members of the community as well.

Housing is a major issue in certain areas of our state. If housing is a major issue in your campaign, if elected, how will you work to ensure that housing projects are environmentally-friendly e.g., not encroaching on, or destroying, wetlands and old-growth forest?

Our County Development Ordinance is nearing completion and the environment is a key aspect of planning in our community. We have to balance any proposed housing development against the existing environment (slopes, soils, drainage, wetlands and forest, karst features, and floodways). In addition, we need to consider the built environment (sewer access, roads and intersections, stormwater projects, etc.) and the needs of property owners in the area (existing homes and businesses). Karst features need careful attention and consideration as they can spread pollutants quickly. We also have forested areas in our county that require special consideration. Flood zones

were recently expanded by FEMA and we must ensure that housing developments don't negatively impact our sensitive environment. Some would advocate for "anything goes" housing - we will not allow that. I take my responsibility as a steward of our county's environment to always look ahead 10, 20, 50 years to determine the viability of any proposed development. This is a responsibility I take seriously. I believe Monroe County is the best place to raise a family in the state! I will continue to encourage creativity in planning - for example, to create tiny home communities that include wooded acreage (untouched) to ensure not only attainable housing, but housing that connects people with nature if this is important to them. We need denser housing, but we cannot afford the environmental impacts of sprawl. It is all about balancing the needs of residents with our environment.

How would you prioritize and address the disparate impacts of climate change on different social groups in your community, particularly vulnerable populations in both urban and rural settings? Please detail specific policies or initiatives you would support or propose that align with climate justice principles, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and energy, as well as protection from environmental hazard

We know that low-income communities are more likely to be impacted by pollution (air, water, soil) as well as climate change. We have to ensure housing developments are built with quality products AND are attainable. There are a number of ways to address this. First, when we create a Residential Tax Increment Finance District (TIF), we will be able to provide new homes for low-income residents. Residents would need to meet the federal qualifications for affordable housing. We need to provide even more spaces for growing food throughout the community. The Westgate development includes garden space. Detmer park has raised garden beds for residents to utilize. The new Van Buren Township Trustee office includes garden space - a real benefit for the residents of that township. I hope we can do much more of this in the future. Expanding transit will address this issue. In addition providing additional park and trail amenities will connect people together and reduce our overall carbon footprint - a benefit to everyone in the community. Everything we do in county government to reduce our reliance on oil and coal is a benefit to all (and helps reduce expenses in county government). The new justice complex will hopefully be net-zero. One programming element we are planning for is a gardening program for inmates. I worked on the Rural Housing Repair program to keep low and moderate-income residents in their homes, by providing basic repairs for free.

How do you see your time in Office as an opportunity to advance climate solutions in Indiana?



I have always advanced climate solutions in Monroe County and I have worked on a number of regional and state initiatives to ensure we are doing all we can to make our community resilient to climate change. Collaboration and experience will help me to continue to address the needs of the community now and in the FUTURE.

